

## 1981 — THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PEOPLE

### People like Theresa...

... a little girl too severely handicapped to go to school, but loving her special education at home in the heart of a warm family. The International Year seeks to bring wider understanding to the problems of the children like Theresa, and of the difficulties of parents who so cheerfully and willingly cope with them. Read more about Theresa and her family on Page 3.

### People like Harold...



... pictured with a heartwarming smile and the finger puppet mice he made in the work centre run by the Ipswich and East Suffolk Spastics Society.

Harold Millen, frustrated by the difficulties of life in a wheelchair, hopes that the International Year will persuade Parliament to bring in tough laws "with real teeth" on access for the disabled.

He says: Why is it so impossible for disabled people to move around freely in their wheelchairs? Why so few ramps providing access to buildings? Why so few lowered pavements? Why does the hierarchy never understand?

Harold Millen wants answers to these questions in 1981.



IN London on January 6, the International Year of Disabled People was given a prestigious launch. The Guildhall was packed with people from every section of society, both able-bodied and disabled, to hear the message of IYDP broadcast.

Increasing awareness of the needs, abilities and aspirations of disabled people.

The participation, equality and integration of disabled people.

The prevention of handicap.

More positive attitudes towards disabled people.

It is estimated that over five million people in the UK — that is, one in 10 of the population — are disabled to some extent, and IYDP aims to prove that they are not a group apart. Anyone who would like to further IYDP ideals should contact their local disability organisation or council for voluntary service.

More about IYDP on  
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### People like Lin...and millions more



... who despite overwhelming handicaps have succeeded in making a positive contribution to life.

Lin Berwick, blind since she was a teenager, and cerebral palsied since birth, holds down a full time job as a telephonist in a City bank combined with broadcasting on hospital radio, fund-raising for her local handicapped group, writing her autobiography and focussing public attention on the disabled.

The picture shows Tim Yeo, the Society's Director, finding out first hand, with Lin's help, the realities of life in a wheelchair — full story on pages 6 and 7.

### 'Sick and nasty' hoax on Blue Peter

IT was, said the Blue Peter team, a "sick joke, a very nasty joke."

How, they asked the TV

millions, could adults think it funny to hoax the programme by pledging money to help disabled people in the New Year's Day phone-in auction, especially when

children all over the country were working so hard to raise cash for the Blue Peter appeal?

The usually smiling trio who present the Blue Peter

programme for children were obviously stunned when they had to tell the viewers that the bids of thousands of pounds in the

Continued on Page 4

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400 ARE NEEDED-ONLY 200 PROVIDED

# Society survey reveals lack of intensive care cots

A SPASTICS Society enquiry in all the Regional Health Authorities in England, conducted just before Christmas, has revealed that of the 400 intensive care cots required for England's sick babies, only 200 are at present provided — half the number recommended by all expert reports in the past 10 years, including the recent Short Report into Perinatal and Neonatal Mortality.

No increase in provision has occurred in 10 out of 14 Regional Health Authorities since January 1979, when a Department of Health and Social Security Survey was carried out. These regions are the North Western, East Anglia, Wessex, South East Thames, South West Thames, North East Thames, Oxford, Mersey, Yorkshire and West Midlands.

As a Spastics Society report, "No room at the inn", published in October 1979 stated, the West Midlands had a severe shortage of 37 cots, North Western a shortage of 30 cots and Wessex a shortage of 22 cots.

## Increase

Regions which have increased intensive care cot provisions either as a regional or an area effort include Trent, S Western, NW Thames, Northern.

North East Thames has seven extra cots planned for University College Hospital, London, but at present 10 babies a week are being refused admission to this hospital.

Trent has increased provision from five cots at Nottingham City Hospital and five at Leicester Royal Infirmary to five more at Jessop Hospital, Sheffield, two at Derby City Hospital, three at Scarsdale Hospital, Chesterfield, and two at Barnsley District General Hospital.

The South Western region has a total of four extra cots, one at Plymouth General Hospital, one at Bristol Maternity Hospital and two at Southmead Hospital, Bristol. Six additional cots in the North West Thames region are distributed at different hospitals throughout the region. Northern region



has two additional cots at Newcastle General Hospital.

The Society's inquiry sheds considerable doubt on the DHSS figures produced two years ago.

For example, one region, Yorkshire, stated that they were only asked for "regionally designated" cots so they reported on the six regional cots in Leeds and not several dozen distributed at hospitals through Yorkshire. However, The Spastics Society is concerned about whether these local intensive care facilities can provide the necessary highly sophisticated type of care which is carried on in major hospitals.

Another region stated that the DHSS had told them that if information on intensive care was not forthcoming within an



● MR JONATHAN Aitken, Conservative MP for Thanet East, pictured with his six-month-old twin babies, Victoria and Alexandra, during the Christmas holiday. The twins were born prematurely and their lives were saved by expert neonatal care in Lausanne, Switzerland.

hour they would be omitted from the list altogether.

The Society inquiry revealed great variations in the pattern of intensive care provision for babies in each region. For example, Northern, NE Thames, Wessex, East Anglia and North Western have developed a strong centralised service with one or two "centres of excellence" acting as a referral point for all babies requiring care in the region.

## Local

Other regions believe that local provision is more efficient. Regions such as Yorkshire, South Western, Trent and NW Thames have a highly decentralised pattern with very few babies being referred to the most sophisticated unit.

Jonathan Aitken, Conservative MP for Thanet East, described in a House of Commons debate his long nights of

anguished vigil earlier this year when his prematurely born twin daughters, Alexandra and Victoria, fought for their lives in an intensive care neonatal unit in Lausanne, Switzerland.

As a result of the care they received there, mostly with the aid of British techniques and equipment, they were saved and are now healthy normal six months old babies, but many times since he had wondered if they would have survived if they had been prematurely born in Britain.

As a result of his experiences he is planning a New Year campaign to put pressure on the Government through debates and Parliamentary questions urging it to allocate more resources for neonatal care.

Mr Aitken said: "The failure of the DHSS to accept many of the Short Select Committee's recommendations on neonatal care may lead to more handicapped children. Half measures, inadequate equipment and facilities and non-

specialised paediatricians may save the lives of critically ill new born infants but may also leave them brain damaged, blind or with other handicaps. I believe that all Britain's babies should have expert neonatal care if they require it."

Tim Yeo, Director of The Spastics Society, said: "For a small number of babies expert neonatal intensive care gives the best hope for a healthy and normal future. When will the government realise how short-sighted it is to spend vast sums of money for sick and handicapped people, yet fail to put a small amount in to prevent some of this happening in the first place?"

"According to the DHSS only 0.3 per cent of the entire NHS budget of £11.9 billion is required to put these things right. But Patrick Jenkin has left the regions to make their own choices."

"It is clear from our inquiry that without ear-marking government funding neonatal care is not going to be provided on the scale which is urgently needed to save some of Britain's babies from death and needless handicap."

## UK lags on child support

BRITAIN lags behind some European countries in sharing the cost of supporting children.

In a study of financial support for children in the European Community, Jonathan Bradshaw and David Piachaud have, for the first time, systematically compared the methods of child support and their value.

The survey takes account not only of child benefits and tax concessions for children but also of differences in the financial aspects of education, health and housing.

The research was supported by the European Community and the Social Science Research Council. The results, which relate to January 1980, are published in "Child Support in the European Community," Bedford Square Press, £6.95.

## Voulez-vous écrier à Phillipe ?

IF you want to improve your French, Phillipe Palteau est l'homme pour vous. For Philippe has asked Spastics News to find a friend to correspond with him.

He is 24 and despite a degree of cerebral palsy is able to travel and he could visit the UK.

Philippe's address is: 19 Rue du Docteur Ramon, F-60700 Ponte-St-Maxence, France.

## A party for Rose



ROSE Lamont, cook at Watford Spastics' Treatment Centre, was on the receiving end of the goodies at her retirement party. As well as gifts of flowers, money, and gold ear-rings, she was also given an iced cake, baked by a fellow member of staff.

Mrs Lamont had been

cook at the centre since it opened in 1963, and never missed a day's work through illness.

Mrs Lamont is pictured (centre) with Matron, Mrs Jean Simmons and Dr Joseph Luder, consultant paediatrician to the centre.

Picture by West Herts and Watford Observer

## News in brief

COURAGE, the major brewery firm, chose White Lodge Spastics Centre in Chertsey, Surrey, as its Christmas charity. The scheme is expected to raise more than £10,000.

Courage pubs over a wide area staged various fund-raising events including a drag race, a "convicts' chain gang" walk and a fancy dress competition.

MICHAEL Solomons' ever-growing reputation as a painter has received another boost.

A resident of the Stars Organisation for Spastics Good Neighbours' House in South London, Michael saw that the prestigious local organisation The Camberwell Society was holding an art exhibition. The theme naturally enough was Camberwell itself and Michael's entry of the same name was judged second. His prize—£20.

PUPILS of Wadhurst Primary School in Sussex have raised over £100 for The Spastics Society by roller skating round the playground. The 10 children who took part are in the 9-10 age group and organised the sponsored skate on their own initiative.

A BAZAAR held by Croydon and District Spastics Society raised more than £1,700. In the first 90 minutes, 250 people visited the Bramley Hill Work Centre where the bazaar was held.

A SPONSORED spelling bee and disco held by pupils of Mildene School, Tiptree, Essex, has raised nearly £300 for The Spastics Society.

THE Spastics Society was the sole beneficiary of the will of Mrs Emmie Behrens, who died at Bridlington, aged 80, leaving £15,976 net.

Mrs Behrens and her husband, Henry, who died in 1961, appeared on stage from the 1920s to the '50s as the world's smallest married couple. Mrs Behrens was 3ft tall, her husband six inches smaller.

POLICEMEN from the CID in Manchester took time off from the fight against crime to hold a charity football match. The game, between the CID men and former football stars, raised £1,400 for the Greater Manchester Spastics Society.

CHELTENHAM and District Spastics' Association has received £1,000 from the local Dean Close School. This was part of the proceeds from the school's annual fair.

MR Idris Daniel, aged 75, is Llanelli's champion collector for The Spastics Society. In just three days he gathered £202 selling flags at the Tesco store in Llanelli and organisers were so impressed that he was asked to repeat his triumph in Neath.

He has been presented with a framed certificate commemorating his efforts.

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# Theresa —in a class of her own

THE teaching of Theresa is "a partnership — which is what education should be" in the words of her father, Ken Whiteley.

It was on March 8, 13 years ago that Theresa was born at home — nearly three months late. She had been due on Christmas Day.

Her mother Rita had already given birth to two girls, Jacqueline now 16 and Rita now 15. Mrs Whiteley recalled:

"My other girls had been crawling around at seven months, walking at nine. Theresa was eight months old and not even looking up. I took her to the doctor and he just kept saying she's a lazy baby. He didn't think there was anything wrong."

Eventually Mrs Whiteley got an appointment at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital.

"They just turned round and said — 'You know what's wrong with your child?' I said 'No' and I was told 'She's cerebral palsied.' I didn't know what that meant so they

said 'That's the fancy name for it — she's spastic'.

"That was it — they just said 'On your way out make an appointment with the CP Unit.'"

Mrs Whiteley was also told her daughter was unlikely to live beyond the age of five. In the years that followed the hospital's words seemed all too likely to be true.

Apart from hospital visits for check-ups and treatment, she was constantly in and out of hospital with broncho-pneumonia and tonsillitis which affected her worst of all.

"At the hospital they call her 'wonder kid' because she's pulled through so often," said her father admiringly. "They said she'd only live till five so every year has been a bonus. Now she's very much stronger."

Once Theresa reached school age it was decided that she should have a home teacher and that was when the Whiteley family met Shirley Bright for the first time. Like them, she lives in the Kentish market town of Faversham and was a trained teacher

with three small sons of her own, Dominic, Jeremy and Matthew.

"Some one in the staff room at Dominic's school knew I was qualified and told me that a little girl called Emma needed a home tutor. I started doing one hour a day each week when the health visitor happened to call to check on Matthew, and told me of a little girl with similar handicaps to Emma — that was Theresa."

For a time Mrs Bright taught the girls and then — "My teacher's training course had barely touched on the subject of teaching the handicapped so I had to teach myself. I did the Open University course on the subject, and went round

## Education is a family affair



● AS Theresa's father Ken says: "Education is a family affair for Theresa" and a strong bond has developed over the years that classroom schooling cannot offer.

to special schools asking for advice."

For a time Mrs Bright taught the girls and then provision was made to include the physically handicapped at a nearby school for the mentally handicapped, and it was decided that both of them should go there instead.

It was to prove a distressing time, for Emma died in tragic circumstances and Theresa, used to her family about her, was unhappy at the school.

"At home we always took her from room to room with us and took her out. At the school she was bored stuck in the one room all day for everything, lessons, play time and lunchtimes surrounded by children in wheelchairs. She couldn't understand it," said her father.

Matters were complicated by the fact that Theresa suffers from grand mal epileptic fits and no one on the staff was qualified to give her injections. It meant an ambulance dash to hospital each time.

Eventually it was decided that home tutoring was the answer after all.

By this time the Whiteleys had a fourth child, little Kenny, who is four. Mrs Whiteley was closely monitored throughout the pregnancy but they never worried about having another handicapped child. Their only concern was that, at first, Theresa might not welcome a new baby having been the baby of the family herself for so long and then that the baby might resent not getting enough attention.

And if the baby had been handicapped? "Well we wouldn't have sent Theresa away, her place is with us. We'd just have managed," said Mr Whiteley.

In fact Kenny is perfectly normal and the two are devoted to each other. Mrs Bright divides the lesson into three parts, the first while Theresa sits in her chair, then a period on the floor and and finishing up with a story which is shared with Kenny.

Soon Kenny starts at his local infants school and already goes one afternoon a week. Theresa misses him a

lot and both the Whiteleys and Mrs Bright feel it would be a good idea if Theresa could join him.

Mrs Bright is strongly in favour of more integrated schooling such as was suggested in the Warnock report and she did, in fact, approach one school with the idea that Theresa might be able to attend. However the school was reluctant and was only prepared to offer one day a week.

"That's no good because she would always be the odd one out. If she went every day the rest of the children would get used to her," said her father. "One of the things children taught at home miss out on is other children's company but that doesn't happen with Theresa. She's got 20 cousins and right from when they are very young, we have them round so they grow up getting used to her. Otherwise children can be very cruel in what they say."

At the moment Theresa is a bright, happy, inquisitive child, benefiting from her parents' love and support. "We know we spoil her," they confess. "But we can't help it."

However cutbacks in public spending are a direct threat to

Theresa's happiness since home teaching is one of the areas likely to be affected.

For the present, though, she looks forward every morning to Mrs Bright's arrival with her store of teaching equipment. "Her hearing is very sharp and she understands most things that are said to her. Mind you if she's feeling bolshie she won't do things out of sheer cussedness. She can actually work quite hard."

"One of the nice things about home teaching is that you get to know the family as well. In a school you might only see the parents once a term and the child as one of the class. This way you get to know the child as an individual and it is very rewarding," said Mrs Bright.

### £1,000 swim

A SPONSORED swim at Woolston Leisure Centre, Warrington, is expected to have raised £1,000 for The Spastics Society's Daresbury Hall Centre. The money will be spent on new bedrooms and other improvements for the benefit of residents.

## The children who are taught at home

AT the beginning of last year, 1,590 children were being taught at home in England, and for the most part they were physically handicapped, delicate or maladjusted.

Home tuition arrangements are made under section 56 of the 1944 Education Act and local education authorities are given latitude as to how they interpret the section's six categories.

The Inner London Education Authority, for instance, provides home teachers for those so severely handicapped that they are unlikely to attend ordinary or special schools; children leaving hospital and unable to go to school for a time; children so emotionally disturbed that they cannot attend a school for the maladjusted; school phobics; those recommended for special

schooling who have to wait for a vacancy and temporary physical disability preventing school attendance for some months, ie, under-age expectant mothers.

Education authorities in other parts of the country might well use different criteria in their assessment of children requiring home teachers. The Inner London Education Authority has 422 home teachers on its panel of whom 332 work regularly, children receiving between three and five sessions at home each week. Said IEA: "The whole essence of home teaching is that it should be flexible, so it contracts and expands according to demand."

The Warnock Report on Special Education made the point that home teachers feel a sense of isolation and recommends that they should have access to special schools' and centres' expertise and support.



● FOR Theresa the best part of the lesson is story-time and the fact that young Kenny can share her pleasure is an added bonus, and fun for Shirley, too.

## Nature trail at Society school

TELEVISION botanist David Bellamy visited the Society's Ingfield Manor School in Sussex to open a new nature trail.

The 300-yard trail, with streams, bridges and a log cabin has

taken three years to create. Most of the spade work was done at weekends by Ray Parish, a member of Horsham Rotary Club, which donated £1,000 to the project.

Said Mr Bellamy at the opening ceremony:

"We all tend to shut ourselves away from the pulse of the seasons, especially if we are handicapped. We don't learn about the relevance of the countryside unless we have the opportunity to experience it."



# Speaking up for the disabled in Parliament...

## From babies to old folk—he is their champion



● MR Lewis Carter-Jones MP, has always been an enthusiastic supporter of the Society's "Save a Baby" campaign. He has asked over 400 Parliamentary Questions in his concern to prevent needless handicap.

LEWIS Carter-Jones, Labour MP for Eccles, in Lancashire, has championed the cause of the disabled for many years. Yet, unlike other politicians who have made this their special concern, he has no personal experience of disability. Neither he nor any member of his family has ever been disabled.

He came to the subject through a lifetime's interest in technology. Flying as an RAF navigator during the Second World War gave him experience of radar and other telecommunications devices. Later, work as a lecturer in business studies brought familiarity with office machinery. Eventually, both branches of knowledge fused into a realisation of how modern gadgetry could help disabled people lead more useful lives.

Born and brought up in Wales, he entered politics as a Trade Union candidate. Having unsuccessfully contested Chester at a by-election in 1957, he won the seat two years later and finally became Member for Eccles in 1964.

He met his wife when she was nursing during the war (she now lectures in catering), and they settled in Wrexham, North Wales. Although they use a small flat in London while Parliament is sitting, they regard Wrexham as their real home and until recently Lewis Carter-Jones played rugby football and refereed for a local team whenever he could get away from Parliamentary duties. They have a son and two daughters, all of whom are in the teaching profession. There are two grandchildren, with another on the way.

Lewis Carter-Jones has been interested in the cause of the disabled throughout

his Parliamentary career, and was a member of the All-Party Group which steered the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act through the House of Commons in 1970. He spoke of the excitement of seeing the Bill go through with literally hours to spare before the House rose for the summer recess.

He is the British chairman of Rehabilitation International, which has 80 member countries, vice-chairman of the Disablement Income Group, an unpaid director of Possum, the firm which makes electronic aids for the severely disabled, secretary of the BLESMA Group, and chairman of the Labour Campaign for Mental Health. He is also involved with the RNIB, Disabled Living Foundation, Action Research for the Crippled Child and "Access to the Skies," a scheme to make commercial passenger aircraft more accessible to disabled people. In addition, he is Parliamentary advisor to both occupational and physio therapists.

He says he was asking questions in the House on perinatal care two years before The

Spastics Society began its "Save a Baby" campaign, with which has continued to be closely identified. In the midst of all this activity he found time to act as a judge in the Society's Achievement Award, early this year.

He told Spastics News: "I've been privileged to meet some of the finest brains in technology and, as an MP, I've met many nice people willing to help use the latest inventions for the benefit of disabled people." He thinks the ability to use technology has come a long way, but the willingness to use it is much slower.

More and more people nowadays are severely injured in road and industrial accidents. Improved medical skills are keeping them alive, but Lewis Carter-Jones wants more than just survival. He feels they should have the means to lead as normal and useful a life as possible.

"Many of these people are capable of work," he said. "But we're not providing a working environment for them."

He feels the micro-chip revolution could be a real boon to the severely disabled, many of whom are at present prevented from working only

by transport problems. But we are moving towards a society in which workers use micro-computers in their own homes, thus cutting out the bother of travelling to work.

Mr Carter-Jones is also interested in technology as a means of rehabilitating the elderly. He feels that people are put into geriatric wards too soon — "I don't like the finality of that," he said.

From the prevention of birth defects to the rehabilitation of the elderly; from jobs on computing to easier air travel, Lewis Carter-Jones' involvement covers the whole spectrum of life for the disabled.

ANNE PLUMMER

## 'Nasty' TV hoax

Continued from Page 1

an auction for a monster bar of chocolate had all melted away.

Such a contrast to their delighted faces during the phone-in auction, when the programme zipped along with the euphoria of bids escalating in thousands to a final winning bid of £37,000. All for a bar of chocolate.

But sadly, the New Year's Day auction turned out to be a hoaxer's holiday. Out of the hundreds that poured in, the highest genuine bid turned out to be not £37,000, not £25,000, not even £10,000 — but for £700.

The next edition of Blue Peter, on Monday, January 5, saw the presenters telling of "something extremely nasty" that had happened during the auction when they had been the victims of so many hoaxers. Used to dealing with the honesty of children they obviously found it hard to believe that so many adults could behave in such a dishonourable manner.

And Mr Roger Heminway, of Princes Gardens, Margate, Kent, whose 16-year old daughter Susan made the successful bid of £700 for the chocolate echoed the producers' disgust.

"It is such a shame that people should do this. Obviously we hoped our bid would win — then we saw the figures rising rapidly. Although it was a pleasant surprise to still win, it was marred by the fact that we were very sad Blue Peter had not raised the enormous sum promised them."

The Heminway family later donated the mammoth chocolate bar to a Salvation Army home.

The Blue Peter appeal, which is being administered by the Society, is trying to raise £500,000 to buy special cars and bungalows adapted for the disabled, and medical equipment to prevent handicap in new born babies.

## Generous man of mystery

A MYSTERY envelope containing £50 for spastic children was left on the counter of a florists' shop in Doncaster, Yorkshire, recently.

A middle-aged man rushed into the shop, placed the envelope on the counter, saying, "seal this and send it to the spastics." Then he went out again before staff had time to speak.

The shop was probably chosen because it had a Spastics Society child-sized collecting doll outside. Said florist Mr Richard Wood:

"We sent a cheque off to The Spastics Society straight away. I think it's wonderful in these hard times that people are so kind as to help people less fortunate than themselves."

## Starry greeting for Santa



COLWALL Court's fire escape served a different purpose when the Stars' Organisation for Spastic's children's hotel at Bexhill, Sussex, held a coffee morning in December. For there, making good use of it was Father Christmas who had dropped in to say hello to the children of the hotel's playgroup. Colwall Court was one of the first centres to run an integrated playgroup for local children and disabled guests.

Dame Vera Lynn, chairman of the management committee aided by two hard working members,

Peggy Cummins and Francis Matthews, was there to see the fun and nearly £500 was raised through the Bring and Buy of home-made cakes and goods.

## 25 years on at Colchester

COLCHESTER and District Spastics Society has celebrated its 25th anniversary. At a party to mark the occasion, a cake was cut by the Bishop of Colchester, Dr Roderic Coote.

Another guest was Ian Root, who now lives at Wakes Hall Residential Centre. He was one of the first spastic babies to be helped by the Colchester Society.

## £2 million sailing barque scheme launched

A CAMPAIGN to build a 135ft sail training barque in which physically handicapped people will form 50 per cent of the trainee crew was launched in London on December 2 by the Jubilee Sailing Trust.

The Jubilee Barque, as she is known at present, is to be built and run by the Jubilee Sailing Trust, a charity registered in 1977 and backed by an initial grant from the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal Fund.

The Jubilee Barque, square rigged on two masts and fore

and aft rigged on the mizzen mast, is planned to enable disabled people to take a full and active part in the running of the vessel as members of the crew. Every part of the vessel will be equally open to handicapped and to non-handicapped crew members and she will have accommodation for up to 30 trainees, including the disabled (up to eight of whom may be in wheelchairs).

The Trust ran feasibility studies which included char-

tering two square riggers which were put to sea with crews of mixed abilities on voyages, which included cross-Channel passages. These proved that not only did the crew integrate into a working team but that the attainments of the disabled far exceeded their own and the Trust observers' expectations.

Construction of the barque is due to begin in 1981, the Year of the Disabled, and she is expected to cost in the region of £2 million.



# OUR HOPES FOR 1981

Spastics News asked: 'What would you like to see happen this year?'



**ANTHONY Quayle:** "If all the world's a stage then 1981 is the year when every disabled person in the country has a role to play. The spotlight is focused on them in the

International Year of Disabled People.

As chairman of the Stars' Organisation for Spastics, I know the hardships that disabled people face each and every day, and my wish in the coming year is that the rest of us come to see the person behind the disability.

"Sometimes the public confuses the character with the person playing it but at least you can wash off the greasepaint and change your costume. It is much more difficult to persuade people that behind speech defects or uncontrollable limbs there are real people with hopes, fears, needs and feelings just like anybody else.

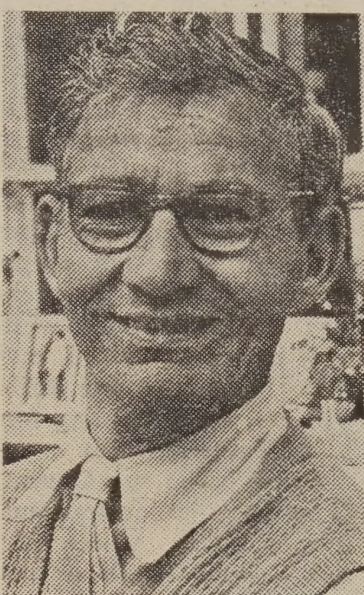
"So before the curtain goes down on IYDP I hope the message gets across."



**CHRISTY Nolan,** the 14-year-old Dublin schoolboy who, despite massive handicap has an astonishing literary genius — and first brought to national attention through the Society's literary contest — will have special cause to remember 1981.

Later this year Wiedenfeld and Nicholson are publishing an anthology of his work entitled "Damburst of Dreams". Through his mother Bernadette he said:

"My wish for 1981 is Access. Not access to public buildings, institutions or transport, although that is important, but entry into the minds and hearts of the able-bodied and an awakening in their conscience of the plight of disabled members of society."



**ERNE Roberts,** winner of the Society's annual Achievement Award and the "voice" of Joey Deacon who wrote the famous book "Tongue-tied," said: "I wish everybody a Happy New Year and wish that the 'Blue Peter' programme gets all the money it wants, and that everything goes all right for spastic people everywhere."



**MICHAEL Brophy,** the Society's Director of Fundraising had absolutely no doubt about his wish for 1981:

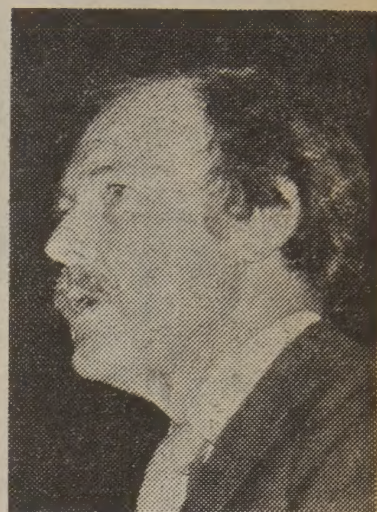
"It is that this year, for the first time the Society's income should break through the £20 million barrier."

**REG Prentice,** Minister for the Disabled until the Cabinet re-shuffle in early January, said: "I hope the central message of the Year of Disabled People will get through and really transform disabled peoples' lives by the end of 1981. I would like them to have jobs that are satisfying and can fulfil their potential, better access to buildings of all kinds and public places, and more disabled people playing a full role in the social life of the community.

"My wish is that the general message of integration will have a practical effect in people's lives."

**DEREK Lancaster-Gaye,** the Society's Deputy Director, said: "The International Year might do something to adjust attitudes to disability. If there is a modest impact on what members of the general public actually think of their disabled fellows, then the Year will be worthwhile.

"It is only going to be a success if the Society's local groups actually get round to working together with disabled people; involving them in doing things. It is no good talking about people being integrated—



they have got to be seen doing things normally.

"Involvement is the watchword, and that's my hope for 1981."

**ALAN King,** the Society's Assistant Director of Finance, said: "I would like to see Britain back on its feet financially because it would not only benefit the country as a whole but help The Spastics Society and its local groups.

"And I would like to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, wake up to the burden charities suffer due to VAT. I would like him to have a complete change of heart!"



**ANN Barrow** is better known as Ann Trotman, of the Disability Advice Centre covering the Avon area, and a well known competitor at the Spastics Games. She was married last November.

"My personal wish for 1980 is to make a successful home for my little girl Tammy who is seven — she's my little girl through getting married and I would like to be a good mum.

"And as far as IYDP is concerned I would like to see it successfully break down the barriers of fear, ignorance and myth, so that the disabled are able to reach their full potential. It's not much point adding years to life if you don't add life to years."



**JOYCE Smith,** as Chairman of The Spastics Society, is someone who is well aware of the vital role that the country's leading care charity has to play during IYDP. On a personal note she said:

"There are so very many things I wish but I think above all I just wish there was greater understanding of the problems of disabled people.

"People so often turn their backs, they might say they're sorry but do they understand?"

"Give the disabled the chance to be independent instead of — as so often happens — taking the chances away from them."

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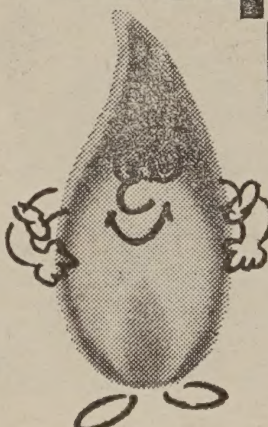
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## "Help yourself to the help you need"



### COOKING

For those with hand disabilities, many gas cookers can be fitted with special handles and controls. And remember, gas cookers need no matches to light them, because they have automatic ignition.

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controls and room thermostats help to save gas and keep running costs down.

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### HOW TO HELP YOURSELF

Go to your local gas showroom. If you cannot go, contact the Home Service Adviser of your Gas Region, who will be happy to call on you at home and provide advice free of charge. (You'll find the address and telephone number in your local telephone directory under GAS).

### MORE HELP

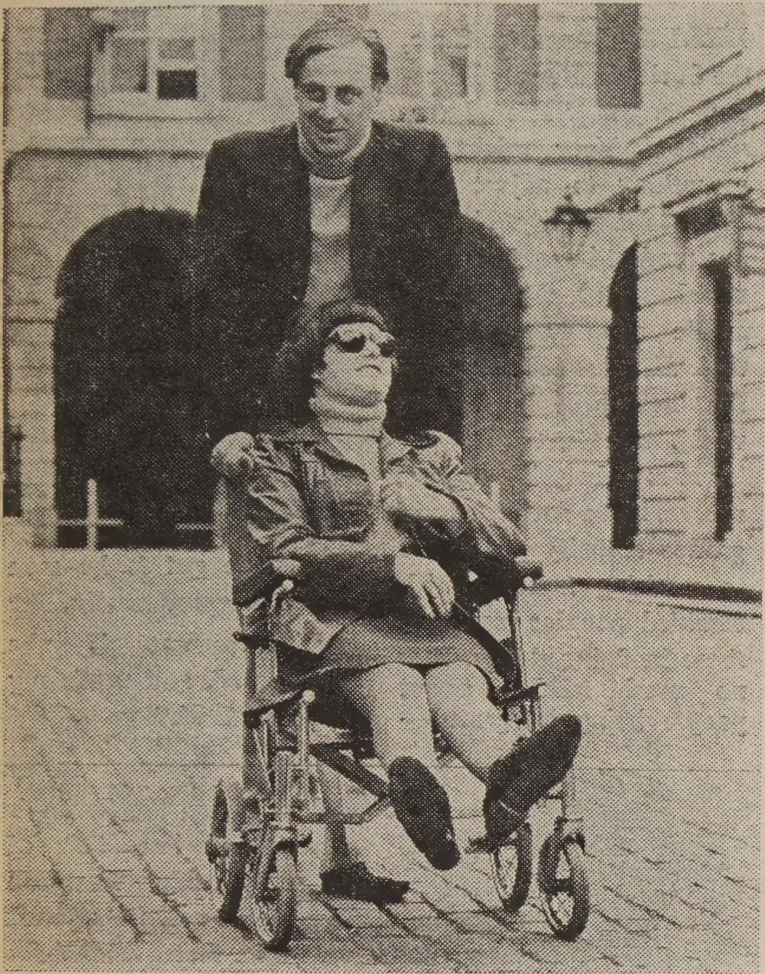
For information about other ways in which we can help—with safety and economy hints, for example, or with a choice of ways in which you can spread the cost of your gas more evenly throughout the year—contact your local showroom.

**BRITISH GAS**



# As the International Year of Disabled People gets under

## Frustration and barriers all the doubt in other



● **TIM** and **Lin** at the start of their wheelchair walkabout — no wonder they look relaxed for the trials of strength, temper and patience were still to come. The BBC TV programme "That's Life" made a similar expedition in early January. "But they used an able-bodied presenter in a wheelchair — our's was the real thing," said Tim.

THIS year is not only the International Year of Disabled People, it is also the 11th anniversary of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act. So Tim Yeo, the Society's Director, decided to find out for himself just how well the Act has worked.

Who better to help him in his fact-finding mission than broadcaster, writer and City telephonist Lin Berwick, who at 30 has surmounted the tremendous double handicap of cerebral palsy and blindness to carve out her own path in the world.

Their first stop was Covent Garden, built in 1830 for the fruit and veg trade—re-opened 1980 at a cost of £3½ million for the tourist trade. Already it

attracts 20,000 visitors a day.

Arriving at Covent Garden revealed the first obstacle—no parking for the disabled.

Undeterred Tim parked anyway—many people use taxis as a solution to the parking problem in London, but for the handicapped, taxis with their high running board are a major obstacle to enter in themselves—and not every cabbie is keen to carry the disabled and their wheelchairs.

Lin can walk with sticks but the cobbled pavements of Covent Garden were another hazard, so she took to her wheelchair with Tim pushing. There are ramps because Covent Garden was originally built with fruit barrows in mind, but there is at least one kerb where there is nothing for it but brute strength.

Once inside the Covent Garden redevelopment though, the wheelchair user is stuck—in his or her



wheelchair, for with few exceptions the shops are all up a two-brick high step. And the basement level shops are down a flight of 20.

At this point Lin felt it might be appropriate to test that all-important facility—the public lavatory. If the Covent Garden development tests the

ingenuity of the disabled how much more so does the unisex lavatory for the disabled provided by Westminster City Council. For a start it is down a flight of 19 steps.

Tim stared in disbelief at the steps while Lin rang the bell marked with the notice "Ring for Assistance." None came so in



● **NOT** all London taxi cabbies are as kind as Mr Phil Mendel, who has been driving a cab for 50 years.

"Very often we have to help the elderly and infirm—it's part of the job assisting them in and out and giving a hand with wheelchairs. I don't mind — you feel you've done something worthwhile, and it's only a few moments in a person's lifetime.

"I'll tell you something else, crippled people are more cheerful and a lot nicer than the average fare!"

And Lin's comment as she arrived at the Society's headquarters in Park Crescent, W1, at the start of the wheelchair walkabout — "Taxis are so high, they are very difficult to get into — crucifies my back."



● **ON** to Covent Garden and the old fruit/veg market, recently rebuilt, refurbished and reopened as a tourist shopping centre, has no special parking facilities for the disabled. Tim Yeo takes a chance on parking anyway, and gets to grips with the collapsible wheelchair, while Spastics News reporter Liz Cook helps Lin.



● **PICTURES** left and right: The essence of the Covent Garden redevelopment is the olde worlde shops with a wealth of goods to tempt the visitor. Alas, those shops that do not have a step at the doorway are down a flight of nearly 20 steps — with no lift. And the shops at ground level, in almost every case, have a two-brick high step at the entrance.

● **"WHAT** to do when you need a loo at Covent Garden?" Well, the plan of the layout has the arrow to the public conveniences pointing in the wrong direction and a hobble over cobbles can be very wearisome for the disabled while they search for the right one.

And that's just the start of their troubles. Lin followed the instructions, pressed the bell for assistance, none came, so as the picture right shows, Lin and Tim counted a spine-shattering 19 steps down to the unisex loo.

## What happens





# Way, Spastics News goes on a wheelchair walkabout the way in London — and no cities too

The Spastics News wheelchair walkabout, **BERWICK** demonstrated the access problems she lives with every day of her life, **TIM YEO** provided the muscle power. **COOK** wrote the story, **MARGARET RAY** took the pictures.

Tim put his back to manoeuvring Lin the steps. In to see the problem access," he muttered way of under-stand. The time they had their goal the key-attendant material-ly confided to Tim ignored the bell

because with his bad back he couldn't be expected to lift wheelchairs.

Given the limited space it was remarkable that the planners had been able to incorporate so many impracticable features. In order to get a wheelchair in the door must be held open—effectively screening the entrance to the Gents—

a factor which caused a number of men to emerge red-faced from the Ladies.

People talk about "Not enough room to swing a cat"—how much more is needed to swing a wheelchair? And the cardboard carton acting as a waste paper bin for hand towels also contrived to get in the way of the wheels.

The handrails either side of the toilet proved too short to be of real value, the toilet chain was way up out of reach—no floor stud or wall lever flush here—and the hand basin was equipped with ordinary taps.

Lin persevered, and when the time came to dry her hands she had a choice of two pieces of equipment—an electric blow dryer, and a paper towel dispenser which required the disabled user to pull a length of paper down and then UP. Both are situated on the wall—out of reach of a wheelchair.

"I have never SEEN

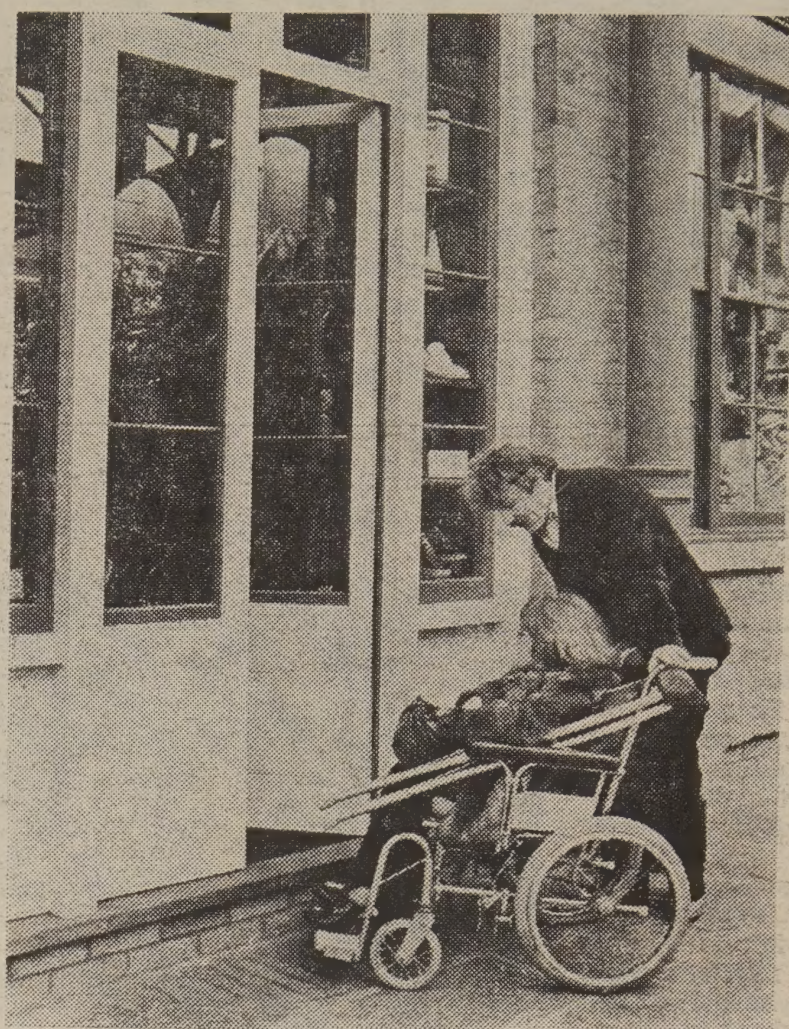
such a stupid loo," said Lin.

Leader of the Covent Garden development team, Geoff Holland, admitted that "not a lot" had been done for the disabled within the scheme. "We've had a lot of correspondence with organisations for the disabled because of the difficulties for people to get around.

"We costed out the issue of access and regretfully there was nothing we could do. We couldn't put a lift in anywhere because of the lack of foundations, and because we couldn't underpin."

Mr Holland pointed out that when the Jubilee Market is finished there will be toilets for the disabled there built to the

Continued on Page 9



● ABOVE: Kay and George Rutter were paying their second visit to Covent Garden to look at the shops despite the fact that the first time they got booked for parking. Their first words were "Have you seen the loo!"

Kay had polio when she was six and she and George, who is an estimator, live at Northwood, Middlesex.

"I think it is all very nice here but I can't even get into most of the shops and there's no lift that we've found," said Kay.

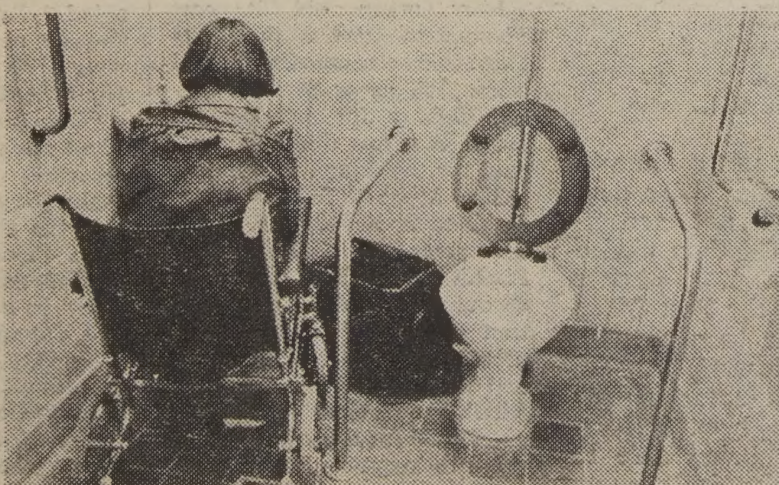


## ps when you want to go to the loo...

● THE toilet for the disabled at Covent Garden was a considerable gem of architectural planning — it combined just about every possible obstacle for use by a disabled person.

Virtually too small to swing a wheelchair, the hand rails either side of the seat stopped short of where they were needed. The chain hung high out of reach by the cistern, the hand basin was equipped with ordinary taps and nothing else — no ledges or surfaces to put things on, or brace against — and then there were the hand driers. The loo boasted two—both at able-bodied height, and the one that dispensed paper towels required the user to tear the towel off by a sharp UPWARD tug.

The normally articulate Lin was speechless . . . but our pictures tell the story.



● LIN is a devout Christian and loves the Wren masterpieces which, along with the Tower of London and Buckingham Palace symbolises London for the tourist—St Paul's.

You have to be keen to get in if you are disabled. The majestic sweep of steps looks good in a snap-shot but if you are in a wheelchair you need a hefty helper!



● AS a celebrated telephonist Lin thought the new press button telephone kiosks were wonderful and just as inaccessible as the old-style ones — with a step up and a door that weighed a ton.



# Work centres fight slump with bright ideas

FOLLOWING the story in the November issue of Spastics News about the bleak prospect facing Spastics Society work centres as the recession worsens, Contracts Manager Mike Loseby has brought us some good news of fresh contracts received.

The "Beaumont" range of porch lamps has been

made at Sully and Chingford since June and a new model, the "Cheviot," has now been introduced, which can be produced more cheaply.

The parts are made at the Society's Miriam Harris Works in Chingford, Essex, sent to the Sully Work Centre in Wales for assembly and returned to Chingford for distribution.

The lamps are sold

directly to dealers and the fact that they are made by spastics is not mentioned until after an order has been placed. Thus it is certain that the lamps are sold on their merits, with no element of charity involved.

Already 72 lamps have been sold to a firm in Yorkshire and there have been four export inquiries.

Another product of which Mike has great hopes is the

"Charabang" range of children's stationery. It is printed at the Society's Meadow Works in Birmingham, and the packs will be assembled at another work centre, yet to be decided on.

The writing paper is printed in bright, eye-catching designs. Each pack consists of eight envelopes (two red, two green, two blue, two yellow), eight sheets of writing paper printed in each of the same colours, four continuation sheets, a pencil, rubber and ruler.

Each pack depicts one of four cheerful characters — a lion, elephant, and two kinds of clown. The same characters are repeated on a range of children's aprons and a "colour-it-yourself" calendar for 1982.

Paperchase, the leading stationery firm, has placed an order for the packs, which will contain nothing to indicate that they are produced by spastics, although retailers will be told. The "Charabang" range will be shown at the Brighton Gift Fair, which Mike

hopes will result in further orders.

A further item, which will directly benefit disabled people, is the "Chailey" pointer. This enables people who cannot use their hands to type by means of the "unicorn" device attached to a head harness. This is made at the Society's Sheffield and Manchester Work Centres and is selling so well that the distributors have been able to reduce the price — quite an achievement in these inflationary times.

## Prince's gift will aid India's disabled

MITHU Chib, the chairman and founder of The Spastics Society of India was presented to Prince Charles on his recent visit to Bombay. In our picture they are discussing the Prince's gift of three converted Land-Rover minibuses, and over £10,000 towards much needed new school building.

On the left is Pamela Stretch, physiotherapist and vice-principal of the Bombay School for Spastic Children, together with the wife of the Governor of Maharashtra. The Land-Rovers will improve the Society's capacity to work in the more remote and poor urban and village areas around Bombay.

The school building work will start soon in Bangalore, where the Society has recently acquired a site on which to build a comprehensive group of services for physically handicapped children and young adults.

The Action India Group in Britain under the chairmanship of Mr Alex Moira, a vice-chairman of The Spastics Society, has been helping with the design of the buildings. The group has also contributed to the planning of conferences in several cities in India, to take place towards the end of the International Year of Disabled People.

### Story book cash

THE sale of used paperback books has raised over £140 for spastics in Mitcham, Surrey. Newsagents Fred and Margaret Hartshorn take in the books that have not been sold at jumble sales and resell them in return for a charity donation.

### Shoe problem because of your feet?

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## —and Stan seeks to open new doors

AFTER a busy life in industry Stan Stanbrook at 65 is looking forward to a busy time in retirement furthering the cause of the disabled and helping industry and trade unions to open the doors for a disabled workforce.

He had retired from Tube Investments Domestic Appliances Ltd, just six months when he was appointed the Society's industrial adviser.

It is an honorary position and ties in with

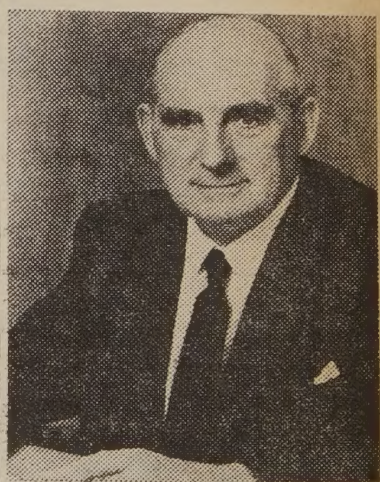
the need to focus as much attention as possible on the problems facing the disabled seeking employment, during the International Year of the Disabled.

He had 41 years with Tube Investments, starting as planning engineer and rising to chairman of the gas division. It is 24 years since the company's personnel manager, in his words "inveighed" him into visiting the Society's Sherrards Training centre.

"I was impressed with the work being done there and finally agreed to take one of the lads to work on the production of the Ascot gas water heater, to see if we could accommodate him.

"That was Nick Butler, who next year comes up for his 25th anniversary service award. He started off doing just one job in the organisation — now he does several, and is happily married."

Stan became so involved in the aspirations of the Society that in the years that followed



Stan Stanbrook

he would address conferences on the subject of employing the disabled.

"I was invited to sit on a steering committee on getting the Society more involved in industry and this coincided with my retirement. The job of industrial adviser struck me as the best way of putting my experience to use in the time I now had available."

Part of the task he sees as persuading management and trade unions to co-operate in the employment of the disabled. To this end he has already made successful contacts with three major companies and a trade union.

"One way is to get them to adopt various work centres — especially those which do engineering. That way it will help the able-bodied to realise that: 'there, but for the grace of God, go I'."

"It is a long term venture and not all companies are in difficulties because of the recession. Many are still doing quite well and even those that are hit will be able to play a part when times get better — which they will. My job, virtually, is to open the doors for the Society's teams to go through."

## Telethon bonanza, now a share-out for good causes

IT was The Spastics Society's "Save a Baby" campaign that fuelled Thames Television's desire to mount the massively successful Telethon. At a Press conference called by Thames to announce the first allocations from the £1,177,175 donated to the programme, producer Simon Buxton paid tribute to the Society's role.

"Back in July, 1978, those of us working on the 'Help' programme were particularly impressed by The Spastics Society's 'Save a Baby' campaign, but we were very aware that, because of various regulations we could not feature specific fund-raising appeals.

"We initially thought of running the Telethon to co-incide with the International Year of the Child but then came the ITV strike so we had to call a halt."

In the end, the first-ever Telethon in Britain was screened by Thames on October 2-3 and the three co-producers at the conference, Simon, Ian Martin and Diana Potter were jubilant at its success, as was Lady Pike, who is chairman of the Thames Help Trust set up to administer the money.

"We are awfully excited at the results," said Lady Pike, "not just because of the money but also on the practical side, the amount of need it uncovered. It was more than even those of us who work in the voluntary field realised."

Lady Pike is head of the WRVS, the only charity in the country that does not rely on fund-raising as a means to exist. That made her the perfect choice to act as chief scrutineer of over £17 million-worth of appeals for funds. A panel of experts in each field considered the applications in each of the five categories eligible for help.

They were: to assist the prevention of perinatal mortality and handicap in new-born babies; to provide facilities for mentally handicapped and physically handicapped and sick children; to stimulate schemes for the care and well-being of the under-fives; to encourage and support schemes for "latch-key" children, and to nurture self-help groups which benefit children and young people.

The producers had good reason to exult: "Didn't we do well?"

As a TV programme, the Telethon captured the vast majority of the audience from the BBC for nearly the whole 12½ hours it was transmitted. It brought in

more than a million pounds and the money came in fast.

As Ian Martin pointed out: "Pledges are one thing — money in the bank is another. More than half the donations were banked within a month which, according to our overseas advisers was fantastic." And in addition the money was not creamed off from other charities.

Thames was very sensitive to criticism that the money would have been donated to charity anyway and that by virtue of the glamour of the event it would be robbing fund-raisers already toiling away.

They cited two independent instances — one children's charity had its flag-day at the same time as the Telethon and its takings were not affected; and the BBC's Sunday morning radio appeal by John Dunne two days later, also made the amount expected.

"If anything, people were stimulated into giving — if not to the Telethon then to another appeal."

Money is still coming in at the rate of £1,000 a day, much of it not accompanied by Telethon pledge forms. The 240 phones installed by the Post Office were unable to cope with the demands made on them and though some money might have been lost by people not being able to get through, it appears that many decided to give anyway.

Among the first cheques

to go out were one of £75,000 to King's College Hospital and one of £50 to IVS Toy Workshop for handicapped children. Thames was concerned to get money to those in urgent need so that projects did not founder because the cash took too long to come.

There were well over 1,000 applications, and the panels were impressed by the amount of care and preparation that had gone into the outlines. "They were of a very high standard of budgeting, in fact with some we wondered how they could do it so cheaply!"

Despite admitting that putting on the Telethon "nearly killed them", all three producers were enthusiastic about the possibility of another. "We learnt a lot — we'd have more preparation time to give big firms a chance to help." Would Thames be equally enthusiastic? Basically yes. Thames will consider it during the coming year with the idea of transmitting a second Telethon in 1982.

How much did it cost Thames to televise the Telethon? "Blood, sweat, time and tears. We never reveal financial figures for programmes but it cost less than the BBC paid for the Sound of Music!"

The Spastics Society benefits from two categories in the first round of cheques. The Health credit card scheme to encourage rubella immunisation got £2,500 towards pilot project costs over three years, and the Advocacy Alliance in which the Society is involved got £7,500 for a project to help those in long-stay hospitals.

Thames stresses that as the account does not close till the end of March, donations can still be sent to the appeal.





# The Year is launched - will it bring new awareness?

ISTECH '81 is the name of a conference being organised by The Spastics Society, in conjunction with British Rail, for the International Year of Disabled People. It will be held at Sussex University from March 30-April 3, 1981 and the theme will be disability and technology in the '80s.

Cost for a single day is £30, including coffee and lunch, or £125 for the whole conference.

Speakers will include Peter Parker, Chairman of British Rail, Gunnar Mylen, Association for Mentally Handicapped Children, Sweden, Pamela Cluff, architect and organiser of the Rehabilitation Engineering Seminar, Toronto, Canada, Charles Woodcock, Director of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, Boston, USA, and various other international experts.

Applications and enquiries to the Conference Co-Ordinator, W. M. C. Largeaves, MBE, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 6EQ.

THE Spastics Society has also formed a committee to arrange other events for the IYDP, concentrating on different aspects of its work. The theme for April will be education, and in May further education and adult education will be covered.

In June the stress will be on careers advice and work training and July, appropriately, is the month for holidays, recreation and leisure. In September, work centres and open employment will be publicised. The themes for October, November and December will be home making, group living and volunteering respectively.

The Spastics Society has appointed IYDP co-ordinators in all its regions:

**North East:** Sue Smith, Regional Officer, Royal Chambers, Station Parade, Harrogate HG1 1EP.

**North West:** Aileen Egan, Regional Officer, 62 Bridge Street, Manchester M3 3BW.

**East:** Penny Rigby, Regional Officer, Broadway Chambers, Station Place, Letchworth, Herts SG6 3AF.

**West:** Ted Rhodes, General Manager, Thorngrove Agricultural Centre, Gillingham, Dorset.

**South East:** Sara Entwistle, Senior Regional Officer, Donaldson House, Massetts Road, Horley, Surrey RH6 7QZ.

**London:** Sue Kendall, Administrative Assistant, 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1.

**Wales:** Moi Pritchard, Senior Appeals Officer, 45 Park Place, Cardiff CF1 3BB.

**Midlands Region:** Marion Bowen, 23a Crommele Lane, Copthorne, Salop.

UNDER the blank stare of Gog and Magog, and the searching glare of television arc lights, the International Year of Disabled People was launched at the Guildhall, London, on January 6, with, said Lord Snowdon, the hope that rather than just a year it would be the start of a new era of understanding and action, and the breakdown of social barriers of fear, prejudice and ignorance.

As President of IYDP England, he pointed out: "The ill-informed consider the handicapped a small minority group — it is a shattering thought that more people suffer from some kind of handicap than there are unemployed whose problems are discussed daily — and their unemployment rate is double that of their counterparts."

"Obviously no one intentionally sets out to discriminate against disabled people. The barriers nearly always exist through lack of thought, lack of planning, lack of design research and sometimes through embarrassment because of a lack of contact, education and appreciation of their needs."

## Access

He stressed the need of access for wheelchair users as a right, the necessity for preventing handicap through pre-natal care and the importance of integration.

"For far too long the needs of disabled people have been ignored. Now this year is the time and opportunity to start putting things right."

He also spotlighted the plight of those in long-stay hospitals: "Walled inside Dickensian institutions, absolutely isolated and living an intolerable existence utterly unnecessarily."

It is the start of 1981 not 1881 so for heaven's sake let us try to make certain the mistakes made then, and up till yesterday, are not allowed to be made today, tomorrow nor ever again in the future."

Kit Aston, the Chairman of IYDP announced that the committee had already written to the new minister for the disabled, Hugh Rossi, within hours of his appointment pleading for the restoration of the five per cent cut in sickness and invalidity benefit, and for strong encouragement to local authorities to help

those already suffering more than their fair share of problems.

He also announced that the Queen, as her contribution to IYDP, would be holding a garden party for the Disabled at Buckingham Palace during July.

## Message

In a special message to Spastics News readers, Jack Ashley, the MP, disabled himself by deafness, said: "The Year can have a tremendous impact on the lives of disabled people. It can be a springboard for action for many years ahead. By changing public attitudes it can transform the status of disabled people. But we also need a change in attitude by the Government."

"The philosophy of demanding that severely disabled people must share the nation's economic problems should be repudiated. There should be positive discrimination in favour of disabled people. And that means hard cash and resources must be provided for them."

# Philip Varcoe — a dedicated pioneer

THE pioneer of the Cornish Spastics Society, Philip Varcoe, OBE, died on December 10 at the age of 76. He had recovered well from a series of heart attacks but had been admitted to Fowey Hospital following a mild stroke.

Mr Varcoe was a member of an old and distinguished Cornish family, his grandfather founding the family fortunes with a clay mining business, and Mr Varcoe was managing director until it was bought up by English China Clays.

It was while living in Par some 20 years ago that a meeting took place that was to lead to the formation of the Cornish Society, and change the lives of all cerebral palsied people in the county. Also living in a tiny cottage in Par was Mr Ian McGilvrey and his widowed mother.

Mr McGilvrey, now in his 60s is very severely

handicapped and Mr Varcoe became deeply involved with the family and made him his ward.

In 1962 with five other people including Mr and Mrs Pomeroy and Mr and Mrs Frank Odgers, the Cornish Spastics Society was founded. It was to prove so successful that eventually it expanded into six separate groups.

Mr McGilvrey was living in a Cheshire home when Mr Varcoe bought the old cottage where he had lived, and it was converted into two holiday flats for those with cerebral palsy.

At the inauguration Mr Varcoe spoke of the great need of the Society for a big house which could be used as a residential centre. His words were heard by Mr James Holman who donated his family home Roswarne, to the Cornish Spastics Society.

Now called the Gladys Holman House in memory of Mr Holman's mother, the house in Cambourne is home for 32 spastic residents and administered by the national Society.

A medical advisory service was set up, followed by an assessment centre at Truro hospital, until about 10 years

ago a project was begun which was to prove dearest to Mr Varcoe's heart. On land he donated to the Society now stands the Church Town Farm Field Studies Centre at Lanlivery—unique in the facilities it offers the disabled. That was in 1975, and in the following year's New Year's Honours List he was awarded the OBE.

His funeral, conducted by the Bishop of Truro, the Right Reverend Graham Leonard, was attended by a great many Cornish dignitaries, including Sir John Carew-Pole, a former Lord Lieutenant and Patron of the Cornish Society, representatives of every Cornish Spastics Society committee, and from headquarters the Chairman Mrs Joyce Smith and the Deputy Director, Derek Lancaster-Gaye. The tiny church of St Mary, Par, was filled with 500 mourners.

Mrs Beryl Odgers was one of the original committee of six and a close worker with Mr Varcoe over the years, first as welfare and administrative secretary and then as secretary for welfare alone. She said: "He was a great man with a great heart. He was always very active and always involved no matter what it was. Any

function, any meeting anywhere if he could go to it and get money he would. He was an ardent fund-raiser."

Charmian Mould, the Society's senior regional officer in the West said: "As well as his fund-raising activities he really did all he could to make the Churchtown Centre really successful, and it was very much part of his life."

Derek Lancaster-Gaye said: "I'd known him for many years and had an enormous respect for his unparalleled energy, generosity and perseverance, all of which contributed to the improvement of conditions for the disabled people of his native county."

# The Duchess takes the stage



● THE Royal Festival Hall was packed to capacity for the Stars Organisation for Spastics annual Carol Concert on December 13, which was attended by the Society's Patron, the Duchess of Kent. As the curtain rose for the finale of the show, which had featured many SOS celebrities, the Duchess made a guest appearance on stage to give a reading of a poem by Thackeray.

# Our wheelchair walkabout

Continued from Page 7

latest standards. However, that would be in five years time, and a "Save the Jubilee Hall" campaign could put the date back even further.

And Westminster City Council, which is responsible for the convenience at Covent Garden, when told of its shortcomings, said: "Oh dear, it sounds as if it's something the planners never realised they'd done!"

Lin is passionately fond of churches and has helped research a "Good Church" guide for the disabled. St Paul's was once a great draw for the disabled—after Sir Christopher Wren completed it the crippled soldiers and sailors would flock to the steps to beg for alms.

Three hundred years later the steps to St Paul's are no asset to the disabled as Tim found hauling up Lin's wheelchair.

Finally Lin thought she'd better give her Mum a ring

THE watching millions saw Tim and Liz struggling to get Lin in her wheelchair down the steps when one of Margaret's pictures for Spastics News was featured in Esther Rantzen's "That's Life" programme on January 11. Lin got in touch with the BBC programme after it screened a piece on the problems of access.

just to let her know she was all right on her wheelchair walkabout. But a public phone box proved impossible to use.

Said Lin, "First you

can't get a chair in the kiosk, even if you're on sticks you can only enter sideways like a crab. The receiver is placed in such a way that a blind person would find it impossible to cope with."

"If any real meaningful effort is going to be made to help the handicapped in IYDP surely access is the most important place to start. There's been a lot of fine talk about integration, but I have been turned away from cinemas and theatres even on sticks because I've been told I constituted a fire hazard!"

"It is utterly absurd to issue a commemorative stamp for IYDP instead of spending the money on access — the slogan should be RAMPS, NOT STAMPS!"

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MRS Kathleen Richards, of Laurel Avenue, Gravesend, made a very wise decision when she entered the Spastics Pool Autumn '80 competition, featured on the fortnightly results bulletin. Her entry qualified for the first prize of the "Car of the Year," a Ford Escort saloon. Picture shows Spastics Pool area supervisor, Mr H. Wilkins, presenting the keys to Mrs Richards.

There was no outright winner of the second prize of a BL Mini City saloon. Therefore, the cash value of the vehicle was divided equally between Mr W. H. Saunders, of Cardiff, and Mrs A. North, of Cotting-

## News about the Spastics Pool

ham, North Humberside.

Just over 600 entrants received wine and spirit packs, in time to celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

The competition, which was also advertised in the TV Times, attracted well over 100,000 entries. The next special competition for Spastics Pool supporters will be featured in the spring.



MR P. J. O'Brien (second right), chairman of the joint appeals committee for the Mary Denny and Cranage Hall hospitals, receiving a Good Neighbours Trust cheque for £1,000 from cabaret stars Cannon and Ball, at the Golden Garter Nightclub, Wythenshawe. Also pictured, Spastics Pool representative, Janet Bancroft.

The hospitals' appeal was launched to raise £50,000 for hydrotherapy pools. The Good Neighbours Trust is one of three established in the early 1960's by Top Ten Promotions Ltd, promoters of the Spastics Charity Football Pool.

# Window on Wales

## Getting back on the road

WHEN members heard that the Variety Club of Great Britain were taking back the specially adapted ambulance from the Swansea and District Spastics Association, the Swansea and Mumbles Round Table decided to raise £12,000 to supply "Longfields" with a similar vehicle.

A cheque for £5,000 has already been handed over, and the fund received a considerable boost from a sponsored walk that was held from the St Helens Rugby Ground to Mumbles and back, a distance of 10 miles.

The event attracted many walkers including members of the New Zealand "All Blacks" team.

The picture shows amongst other Mr T. Gwyn John, a founder member of the Swansea



and District Spastics Association, Graham Mouire the Captain of the All Blacks, Hika Reid, and other members of the touring party. Also in the picture can be seen some of the trainees who attend the Swansea Work Centre and will benefit from the new ambulance.

It is believed that walk proceeds will exceed £2,500.

THE Carmarthen "Save a

Baby" appeal was successfully concluded with a presentation of the latest kind of radiant heat incubator for the Special Care Baby Unit at Glangwili Hospital, Carmarthen.

The appeal, which was launched in February 1980, captured the imagination of the school children within the old county of Carmarthen, and the majority of the money came from sponsored events in primary and junior schools. The fund was also very fortunate in being granted a

donation from the Wal Church Fund of £1,000 and a generous donation of £500 from the Good Neighbours Trust.

The incubator was handed to Mr Bill Philpin, Chairman of the Dyfed Area Health Authority, by Mrs Mary Rees, a member of the Carmarthen-shire Group at a buffet given at the hospital.

A CHARITY shop, run by Miss Christine Dombrowski, the Newport support group raised £940 in five days to the funds of the Monmouth-shire Spastics Society.

Christine, who took a week's holiday to run the shop reported that queues of 10-20 yards outside the shop were a regular occurrence as the customers waited to pick up a bargain.

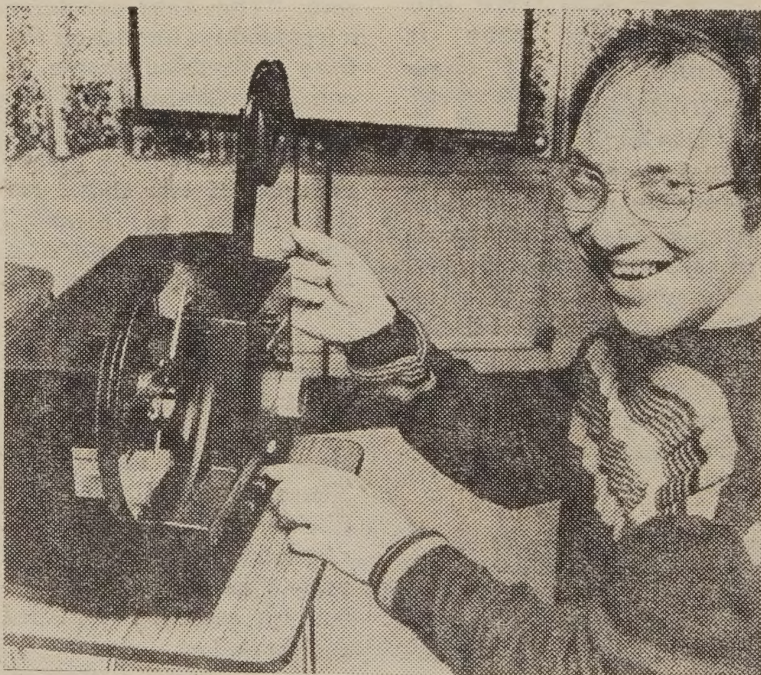
## Why not go to Peter's pictures?

PETER Stevenson of Barry, South Wales, is ready and able to give free film shows to any groups in the area but nobody seems interested in taking up his offer.

It has taken Mr Stevenson, a spastic with some difficulty in walking, several years to build up the equipment for showing films but his efforts to use his hobby for the benefit of the community have met with little encouragement.

Picture shows Mr Stevenson with projector and blank screen all ready for action but no customers.

Picture by South Wales Echo



## Your ads

FOR SALE: Reconditioned IBM typewriter (Model N 723, Selectric 71/72 13.5 carriage). Purchased October 1980 for £67.85 through special scheme for disabled people, but never used owing to change in business plans. Owner wishes to sell at same price. Spastics News Box No 104.

COLWALL Court Holiday Hotel for Handicapped Children.

Vacancies for children aged 5 to 16 years.

Facilities include swimming pool, lift, coach—fully qualified staff.

Please apply: The Manager Colwall Court, Pages Avenue, Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex. Telephone (0424) 211491.

SPORT and Physical Activities With Mentally Handicapped People Living in the Community.

The Disabled Living Foundation, in association with the Sports Council has arranged the following study days: February 24 — The Town Hall, Manchester; March 24 — Tennyson School, Harborne, Birmingham; June 23 — Welton Day Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; July 6 — Countryside Centre, Cambridge.

These study days will be of interest to parents, Social Services personnel, organisers and leaders of Gateway Clubs, recreation managers, sports centre managers, voluntary and professional bodies associated with the welfare of the mentally handicapped, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and remedial gymnasts.

Further details are available from Miss Margaret Dowd, Conference Secretary, Disabled Living Foundation, 34 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS. Tel No (01) 604 2491. Please include a 9in x 4in stamped addressed envelope.

## Aid from listening landlord

LANDLORDS get to overhear all kinds of things and Jack Evans of the Goytre Arms, Gwent, was appalled to learn, between pulling pints of the theft of £40 from Cwmbran Work Centre.

The theft, by a walk-in thief, was being discussed by Mr George Williams and his wife Clarrie, who is a member of the Society's Executive Council and founder chairman of Monmouth Spastics Society.

As a result, Jack, his wife and their daughter held a coffee morning and raised £83.50 — more than double the amount stolen.

Said Michael Oldham, the Society's senior regional officer in Wales: "This magnificent gesture on the part of Mr and Mrs Evans typifies the attitude of the general public towards the Society and the help we receive in fund-raising."

## Olwyn goes West

OLWYN Gaunt, the South East's Senior appeals officer, is exchanging the rolling downs of Kent, Sussex and Surrey for the wide open spaces and dramatic terrain of Canada.

Mrs Gaunt joined the Society six years ago as secretary to a local appeals officer, and was soon appointed an

appeals officer herself. Such was her success as a fund-raiser that she was promoted senior appeals officer, and not only continued boosting funds but also helped with the training of staff in the region and the rest of the country. Friends and colleagues presented her with wine glasses and decanter before she emigrated with her family to Canada.

A SOCIAL evening with a difference for Mr J. Rankin of Stafford when he received a £5,000 first dividend cheque from Mr Kershaw, proprietor of the Balmoral Restaurant, Ingestre.

Also pictured (from left to right), Spastics Pool collector Mrs S. Baycliffe, Mrs J. Rankin and the Pool's area supervisor, Mr D. R. Stubbs.

## WHEELCHAIRS

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Also at Warndon, Worcester (Telephone 28575)



# Briefing...

on books, aids, holidays, services, to help you and your family

## Snowdon Award for disabled students

PHOTOGRAPHER Lord Snowdon has set up an Award Scheme to help disabled students. This originated from a charitable trust started in 1960 with money received in reproduction fees for official photographs he had taken of the Royal Family.

Although the fund had grown to £14,000, Lord Snowdon decided that this was not enough to initiate the scheme he had in mind. By approaching generous friends and organisations he managed to reach a total of £50,000. The scheme will be administered by Action Research — the National Fund for Research into Crippling Diseases — and will take the form of a bursary or bursaries worth not less than £1,000 a year. These will be awarded annually to one or more needy physically disabled students. This will enable the student to pursue some academic or scientific goal which might not otherwise be possible. A small trophy or symbol of the Award Scheme will also be presented to a person who is considered to have done most for disabled people during the previous year.

## Transport problems?

THE Mobility Information Service, which operates a nationwide advisory service on mobility problems experienced by disabled people, has published a booklet entitled "Wheels Under You." It is aimed chiefly at the young or newly disabled, and is designed to encourage them to seek ways and means of getting out and about and increasing their independence.

The booklet deals with all forms of transport for the disabled: Wheelchairs, both electric and self-propelled; adapted vans able to carry a disabled person seated in a wheelchair, and cars suitable for the disabled driver. A new innovation is the inclusion of a chapter on "Choosing Your Car," which is divided into sections dealing with various forms of physical handicap, and advises on the forms of adaptations required in order to drive a vehicle. "Wheels Under You" is written by David Griffiths, a Winston Churchill Fellow who is himself a wheelchair user, and is available from: Mobility Information Service, Copthorne Community Hall, Shelton Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. Price 25p inc postage.



● SETTING sail for adventure off the Cornish coast in a sailing dinghy—now intrepid sailors can make for the sea in yachts for a week-long cruise.

## Turning viewers into volunteers

WANT to volunteer? Now is the time to turn on the television to find out what opportunities are open to you. The BBC TV Ceefax Unit has launched a six-month pilot programme of information provided by The Volunteer Centre, the national agency advising on volunteer involvement in the community.

The programme, Volunteer!, was screened for the first time in September and will run until April this year when a decision will be taken about future broadcasts. It can be called up and viewed by those with television sets capable of receiving teletext — currently estimated at 80,000 — and is available nationally all the time that BBC2 is on the air. Information is provided by

Volunteer Centre information officer Angela Whitcher, who explains: "The material is converted into six stories, or frames, which are then broadcast for a week and changed for completely new frames every Friday."

"The aim is to promote volunteering by featuring opportunities and describing new and interesting projects. It's really a current awareness service and here at The Volunteer Centre we are providing a back-up service by giving further information to inquirers who have picked up something from the Ceefax screen."

She adds: "Unlike some other teletext systems, there's no cost to the subscriber. Ceefax has a tremendous potential for encouraging volunteer involvement and the BBC and ourselves are monitoring the pilot programme very carefully indeed."

## Access guide for sporting spectators

A NEW guide for disabled spectators has been produced by RADAR, The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, with the co-operation of secretaries and managers of sports clubs and organisations.

"Sports and Leisure — An Access Guide for Disabled Spectators," compiled by Peter Lawton, covers a variety of sports venues such as football, rugby and cricket grounds, horse riding, greyhound racing, speedway and motor racing tracks and tennis clubs.

Many disabled people would like to go to sports events but feel that some of the national sports centres get too crowded and uncomfortable, if not hazardous, for wheelchair users or ambulant disabled people. This guide endeavours to cover sports grounds all over the country and mentions as many venues as possible, whether large or small. It divides spectator access into three categories:

spectators only able to walk short distances with difficulty and unable to manage stairs and steps; wheelchair spectators; spectators unable to get out of their vehicles who will be allowed to view the sports from their cars.

In the introduction Sir Douglas Bader welcomes the guide saying "Not all of us can participate in sporting activities. Indeed many do not wish to do so, but prefer to be spectators from the sidelines. Facilities for the disabled in this respect continue to improve and this guide will help those avid viewers who are uncertain or unaware of the existence of the special facilities available for their comfort and convenience at sporting events."

"This guide will help to integrate the disabled into the community. It will ensure that they are able to participate in activities which are regarded as a normal part of life. I welcome this publication. It will help to overcome some of the barriers which still exist."

"Sports and Leisure — An Access Guide for Disabled Spectators" is available from RADAR, price 75p plus 50p postage and packing.

## Handicap no bar to sailing adventure

LASHED by wind, rain and spray, hanging on to ropes and manning the helm, a party of handicapped people will sail off the Cornish coast next September, not as passengers but as crewmen and women. David Owens, a tutor at The Spastics Society's Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre at Lanlivery believes that this is the first time handicapped people have been offered the chance to sail in this way.

In conjunction with LBC Flotillas Ltd, the centre is offering a sailing and cruising course.

David explained: "The first week will be basic sailing instruction using Drascombe long boats at Fowey, and the second week will be spent putting that learning into practice in Cobra five-berth yachts sailing off the Cornish coast and living aboard. The course is open to any handicapped person aged 17 and over, their family and friends."

David stresses that severity of handicap will be no bar to taking part in the course. "The design of the boats means that even those confined to wheelchairs can get about — they will only need to use



their hands. Wheelchairs will be stowed on board and there will be house-parents to help those who need assistance with personal care."

In fact the only "handicap" that they will not be able to overcome is the unpredictable: "We won't go to sea if the weather is too rough," said David, "otherwise we will cruise along to Falmouth or Salcombe, stopping off in the evening with a visit to pubs and have barbecues."

There will be room for 20 students on the course run by David Owens and Jonathan Chapman who is Royal Yacht Association qualified, and the closing date for entry is February 28. The date of the holiday is September 5-18 and the price, which still has to be worked out, will be inclusive — safety and wet weather gear will be provided.

"It might be a help though, if people could bring sleeping bags otherwise we can provide

● SUN, sea and the salty spray have made the day for these two students after a holiday at Churchtown Farm—now full-scale training and sailing courses are planned.

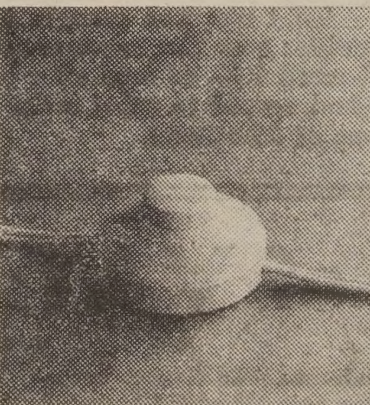
them," David added.

"The great thing about this holiday is that people will be doing everything for themselves, cooking as well as sailing once we put to sea."

"Previous sailing holidays have tended to be in large sailing cruisers with the handicapped sitting about as passengers. Now they will be part of a four-man crew living on board with a supervisor just there to keep an eye on things."

Anyone who longs to go down to the sea again should contact David at Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel 0208 872148.

## Foot power...



NEW from Dysons of Berkhamsted is a practical footswitch that can be incorporated into many electrical appliances. Internationally approved, this elegant and robust white switch is easily fitted to the flex of, for example, standard lamps, spotlights, occasional lamps. Just apply light pressure to the foot switch and the lamp is on or off—useful for the disabled, elderly, expectant mothers and to anyone who has trouble bending.

Available from Dysons, of 15 Park View Road, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 3EY, they cost £1.65 each (postage and packing 25p).

## 'Best building' award for IYDP

THE Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), with the co-operation of the Department of the Environment and the Royal Institute of British Architects, is sponsoring a "Building for the Disabled Award" to be presented in 1981 to mark the International Year of Disabled People (IYDP).

An award will be made in each of the following categories for buildings in England which must have been completed between September 16, 1975 and December 30, 1980:—

a. a new building or group of buildings open to the pub-

lic which has facilities for disabled people.

b. an existing building or group of buildings open to the public which has been provided with these facilities.

Buildings designed specifically for exclusive use by disabled people will not be eligible for nomination.

Anyone may nominate a building in England which they think is deserving of the award whether they be architects, building owners or members of the general public. All nominations must be sent to RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB.

Judging will take place throughout April, May and June of 1981 and subject to the approval of the Department of the Environment, the RIBA and RADAR, the results will be announced in December 1981.

## Any tips on shoes?

MANY parents of mentally and physically disabled children have great problems not only in getting them suitable shoes, but with wear of shoes; difficulties with fitting; delays in supply; with choice of hosiery and many other matters. Whether the children are cared for in their own home, in school, or in hospital, difficulties seem the same.

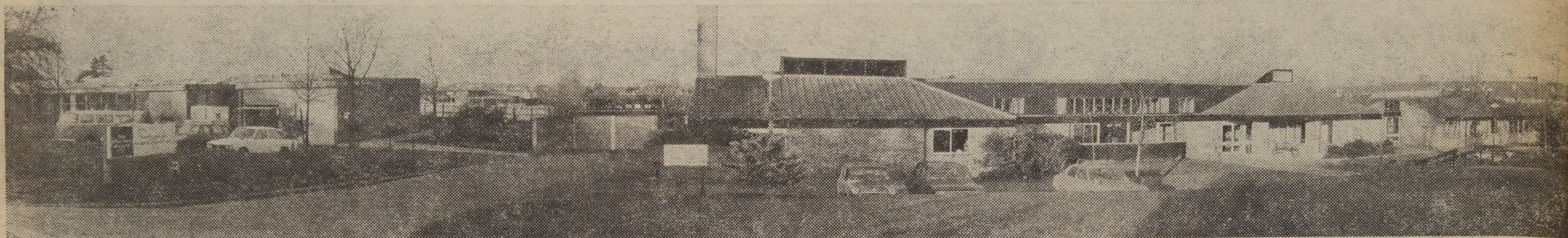
The Disabled Living Foundation is studying these prob-

lems and hopes to write a useful book of advice. It would be very helpful if therapists working in this field could send news of the conditions needing treatment and the special difficulties presented by disabled children, together with answers to any problems solved or suggestions to: Mrs Janet Hughes, MCSP, The Disabled Living Foundation, 346 Kensington High Street, London W14 8NS.



## The Editor of Spastics News tells the sorry story of the VAT burden

### Two 'caring' centres next door to each other:



#### This one pays VAT

ONE picture graphically illustrates why charities are so determined to win the campaign for relief from the payment of Value Added Tax. In the same quiet road in Bury St Edmund's, Suffolk, two "caring" centres stand next door to each other.

On the left, The Spastics Society's East Anglia Family Help Unit. VAT bill, at least £1,200 a year. On the right, Davers Court, a home for the elderly and disabled, run by the local authority. VAT bill: nil.

Local authorities are exempt from VAT, and

charities are demanding the same treatment.

The Society's Family Help Unit, where children stay for short periods to give their families a break from the 24-hour-a-day task of caring for a severely handicapped youngster sticks out like a sore thumb in an area of VAT exemption.

In the same road in Bury St Edmunds, there is also a school for ESN children; a few hundred yards away, a hostel for mentally handicapped adults; within half a mile, an adult training centre for the disabled, and two more homes for old people. These local authority centres provide care, education and training.

We are providing similar services, declare the campaigning charities, so we should be given the same exemp-

#### This one is exempt

tion to save us from the crippling VAT bill.

As to that VAT at the Family Help Unit in Bury St Edmunds, here are some of the examples of the way money has to be handed over to the tax authorities. First the annual budgeted amount, then the sum paid in VAT in each case.

Maintenance of the building, £3,492, VAT, £403.20.

Cleaning materials, £828, VAT, £104.32.

Telephones, £768, VAT, £110.15.

Vehicle costs, £1,212, VAT, £158.5.

Repair and renewals, £1,440, VAT, £187.78.

Equipment, including wheelchairs used by the handicapped children, £1,600, VAT, £130.40.

Stationery, £300, VAT £39.12.

## Society spearheads campaign for Vat relief

THE Spastics Society is joining with other leading charities to fight back against the Chancellor of the Exchequer's refusal to grant them relief from the crippling burden of Value Added Tax, and it is a fight they are determined to win. The message of the campaign is: VAT is a bill we cannot afford. People do not donate money to charities to see it paid into Treasury coffers. We must be granted exemption from VAT in the same way as local authorities who provide similar "caring" services.

The Society is spearheading the campaign because it is one of the hardest hit by VAT. Labouring under a record deficit of £823,000, it faces a VAT bill in 1981 of £4 million, and lack of money has already forced severe economies, such as the closure of the careers and advisory employment service.

On January 8, representatives of the charities met at the Society's London headquarters to discuss campaign tactics, and on January 19, they will have a meeting with the House of Commons group on voluntary service, which will be chaired by Mr Christopher Patten, MP for Bath. There they will put their strong case for VAT exemption.

The charities involved in the campaign with the Society are the Save the Children Fund, Dr Barnardo's, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the National Society

### Why the Chancellor must relent

for Mentally Handicapped Children, Help the Aged, and the National Children's Home.

They approached the Chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe, in November seeking a meeting to discuss VAT, and pointing out that a time when charities were in financial difficulties yet had additional burdens because of the cuts in the social services, they were being crippled by the unfair burden of VAT. They asked for the same exemption as local authorities and other bodies.

#### Plea refused

But in a Commons written reply, the plea was turned down, with the Treasury claiming that to exempt charities would be "inappropriate" and that "any wider general relief from VAT for charities would cost too much in revenue and complicate the tax unduly".

That was bad enough, but what really amazed the charities was the announcement in December that the Chancellor — so soon after his blunt refusal to charities — had agreed to grant relief on sports entry fees to the tune of £5 million.

Tim Yeo, the Spastics Society's Director, reacted angrily. The Chancellor refused the VAT plea from charities, and would not even agree to a meeting to discuss the position, he said, but:

"A month later we see him blandly agreeing to help amateur sportsmen and their clubs to save them £5 million. Even drinks and refreshments in club houses will be exempt from VAT. How can the Chancellor possibly justify this concession when he has refused to help charities who are in serious financial trouble because of the imposition of VAT?"

"Surely caring for the handicapped and the disadvantaged in the country is more important and should be given greater priority than relieving such frivolous activities as golf and horse racing from paying the tax."

"We are disgusted at this announcement. It shows that the government really does not care that charities are struggling to maintain their services in the face of crippling burdens that they should not have to bear. It prefers to help sportsmen to buy their drinks on the cheap."

"This year the Society had the highest deficit in its history, and it is in the midst of an agonising struggle to try to maintain its services for handicapped men, women and children, many of whom are among the most severely handicapped people in Britain. We certainly do not intend to sit back tamely paying enormous amounts of public money donated for the welfare of the handicapped into Treasury coffers while sportsmen get away with substantial concessions."

## The strange world of VAT: Who pays? Who doesn't?

THE facts and figures which provide the background to the Society's VAT campaign have been carefully researched, and provide the firm evidence to prove the way in which charities are discriminated against by the imposition of the tax. And as you will see, there are many strange anomalies.

The Society pays VAT on all goods and services which are taxable. Examples are:

- Property maintenance of schools and centres.
- Cleaning and laundry.
- Educational supplies.
- Telephone charges.
- Printing and stationery.
- Motor vehicle expenses.
- Repairs to equipment.
- Professional fees and general services.

Equipment for schools and centres.

Motor vehicles, ambulances and minibuses.

Aids and appliances for pupils and residents if they are for general use rather than an individual.

When it comes to anomalies, Mr B. F. Hassell, computer consultant to the Society, produced examples for a research study on the VAT issue. Take the case of motor vehicles:

VAT on ambulances and minibuses is recoverable by taxable traders and local authorities but not by charity schools and residential centres.

Society schools have, generally speaking, two minibuses or ambulances per unit. Residential centres normally have two/four minibuses per unit.

One specialised unit has six

minibuses. The Society maintains over 60 establishments.

The average cost of a converted vehicle is £10,000 plus £1,500 VAT, which is not recoverable.

Then there is the case of aids and appliances for the disabled. Subject to very strict rules certain aids and appliances can be zero rated when supplied against a doctor's certificate to an individual for domestic use. However when the same aids are supplied to a charitable school they are taxable at the standard rate and that VAT is not recoverable.

Mr Hassell says a ridiculous situation exists whereby:

An individual can be supplied with any number of aids and appliances zero rated for VAT purposes, provided they are "deemed necessary" by the medical profession. Thus

an individual can have 10 (eg) wheelchairs zero rated for his "domestic use".

However, a school or centre cannot have zero rated one wheelchair for use by 10 disabled people!

On the question of donated medical equipment, he has some other fine examples of anomalies:

#### Equipment

A charity can purchase an adjustable hospital bed (with tilting features, etc), for donation to a NHS hospital and obtain zero rating of that supply.

But if a charity wishes to donate the same bed to another charity the bed is taxable at the standard rate. Likewise, if the public purchases and donates the same bed to a charity they must pay VAT.

Even more strange, is this example on the cost of fund raising:

If a commercial direct mailing company despatches a mail shot they can recover wholly their input VAT on expenses.

A charity cannot recover the input tax incurred on the expenses of its mail shots appealing for charitable donations.

Mr Hassell has many other examples of the anomalies of VAT, charities, and the disabled, and sums up his research paper: "Each and every department of the Society which has an equivalent in a local authority is treated in an anomalous manner."

It is evidence like this which the Society feels must persuade the Chancellor to think again.

#### SPASTICS NEWS

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